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MATSUI INTRODUCES BILL TO PROTECT SACRAMENTO FROM CATASTROPHIC FLOODING

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today U.S. Representative Robert T. Matsui (D-Sacramento) introduced legislation to provide critical flood protection for Sacramento by raising the walls of Folsom Dam by seven feet, thereby creating additional storage space in Folsom Reservoir during extreme storms that would otherwise flood the State's Capitol city. The legislation was simultaneously introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), who serves on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

The "Folsom mini-raise" authorized by the legislation will dramatically increase Sacramento's level of flood protection above the minimum 200-year level of protection the community has long sought. Without such a project, \$40 billion of property including the California State Capitol, 160,000 homes, over 100 schools, six major hospitals, 26 nursing home facilities, and three major freeway systems will remain at an unacceptably high risk of a devastating flood.

Matsui intends to add the provision to the 2002 Water Resources Development Act, an omnibus water and flood control bill, which the House of Representatives is expected to pass next year.

"My top priority in Congress has been to provide Sacramento with the protection it needs from catastrophic flooding. Our residents and businesses should not have to worry that one day everything they care about could be destroyed by a flood," said Matsui. "The Folsom mini-raise will give the citizens of Sacramento the level of protection they need and deserve."

"I am very pleased to introduce Congressman Matsui's bill in the Senate," said Boxer. "This environmentally-friendly legislation will give vital flood protection to the people of Sacramento. By increasing the height of Folsom Dam, this bill will protect an estimated 160,000 homes and apartments from flooding."

Flooding is the number one public safety threat for Sacramento. The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), formed in 1989 in response to Sacramento's vulnerability to devastating flooding, voted unanimously in favor of the plan on November 15th. The bill, which has not yet been assigned a number, authorizes the Secretary of the Army to carry out a flood protection and ecosystem restoration project in accordance with "Alternative Three" of the American River Watershed Draft Supplemental Plan Formulation Report of the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps' report formally recommending the proposal will be finalized next year.

While Sacramento has had several successes in the ongoing effort to raise the level of flood protection, compared to other major river cities such as St. Louis, New Orleans, Omaha, and Kansas City the existing level of flood protection remains woefully inadequate.

The FY02 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill contained \$30.3 million in funding for ongoing flood control improvements. However, the completion of these projects will only provide 1-in-140 year flood protection, well below the minimum 200-year threshold needed by the community. The Folsom mini raise, which will bring Sacramento's level of flood protection to 1-in-213 years, is the critical next step in providing Sacramento with an adequate level of flood protection.

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